

## TOTAL RECALL, directed by Len Wiseman (2012) (notes)

<b>GENRE:</b> action thriller; science fiction, adventure
<b>TAGLINES:</b> What is real? Is it real Is it recall
<b>SETTING: Time</b> The planet has been decimated by nuclear war in the late 21st century, leaving only two nations -- the United Federation of Britain and the Colony. <b>Place:</b> the United Federation of Britain and the Colony; the rest of the earth is largely uninhabitable with the two human outposts connected solely by a hole through the earth's center; Rekall, a company that implants manufactured memories into your brain to give folks something else to think about while they waste their life workin' Earth has been devastated by chemical warfare, leaving only two populated areas connected by a tunnel through the planet's core. On one end of the chute, known as the Fall, is a sleek successor to Britain, an imperial metropole that exploits the teeming, watery Colony down below.
<b>ACTORS/STARS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Colin Farrell as Douglas "Doug" Quaid/Carl Hauser, a factory worker with a stable job and a loving wife suffering from strange violent dreams / one of those exploited workers. He spends his days laboring to create the very machines that would oppress him. But he feels woefully out of place and yearns for something more. He's also haunted by a recurring dream</li><li>• Kate Beckinsale as Lori Quaid, a UFB undercover agent posing as Quaid's wife.</li><li>• Jessica Biel as Melina, a member of the Resistance and Quaid/Hauser's love interest. The extended director's cut reveals that she is Matthias' daughter.</li><li>• Bryan Cranston as Chancellor Vilos Cohaagen, the corrupt and ruthless Chancellor of the United Federation of Britain.</li><li>• Bokeem Woodbine as Harry, Quaid's workmate and best friend who is revealed to be an agent sent by Cohaagen to monitor him.</li><li>• Bill Nighy as Matthias Lair, the leader of the Resistance.</li><li>• John Cho as Bob McClane, a rep for Rekall who offers Quaid the chance to experience an imagined adventure</li><li>• Steve Byers as Henry Reed, a cover for Hauser</li><li>• Dylan Smith as Hammond</li><li>• Ethan Hawke appears as Hauser's original appearance in the director's cut. In the script as originally filmed, both Hauser's memory and physical appearance were heavily altered by the UFB to turn him into Quaid.</li></ul>
<b>Plot Summary:</b> Total Recall is an action thriller about reality and memory. Welcome to Rekall, the company that can turn your dreams into real memories. For a factory worker named Douglas Quaid, even though he's got a beautiful wife who he loves, the mind-trip sounds like the perfect vacation from his frustrating life - real memories of life as a super-spy might be just what he needs. But when the procedure goes horribly wrong, Quaid becomes a hunted man. Finding himself on the run from the police - controlled by Chancellor Cohaagen, the leader of the free world - Quaid teams up with a rebel fighter to find the head of the underground resistance and stop Cohaagen. The line between fantasy and reality gets blurred and the fate of this world hangs in the balance as Quaid discovers his true identity, his true love, and his true fate. <b>(IMDB)</b> At the end of the 21st century, Earth is devastated by chemical warfare. What little habitable land remains is divided into two territories, the United Federation of Britain (UFB) and the Colony (Australia). Many residents of the Colony travel to the UFB to work in factories via "the Fall", a gravity elevator running through the Earth's core. A Resistance operating in the UFB seeks to improve life in the Colony, which the UFB views as a terrorist movement. Colony citizen Douglas Quaid has been having dreams of being a secret agent, aided by an unknown woman. Tired of his factory job building police robots with friend Harry he visits Rekall, a virtual entertainment company that implants artificial memories. Among the choices Rekall salesman Bob McClane offers Quaid are the memories of a secret agent. Just as Quaid is starting to be implanted, McClane discovers that he already has real memories of being a covert operative. As McClane starts to

question Quaid about the memories, UFB police officers burst in, killing the Rekall crews and attempting to arrest Quaid. Quaid instinctively reacts and kills the officers before escaping. Upon returning home his wife Lori attempts to kill him, revealing that she is an undercover UFB agent who has been monitoring him for the past six weeks. After Quaid escapes, Charles Hammond, a "friend" Quaid does not recognize, contacts him and directs him to a safe-deposit box. Quaid finds a recorded message from his former self with the address of a UFB apartment.

While being pursued by Lori and other human and robot police, Quaid meets Melina, the woman from his dreams. At the apartment Quaid finds another recording, revealing that his name is actually Carl Hauser, an agent working for UFB Chancellor Vilos Cohaagen. After defecting to the Resistance, Hauser was captured by the UFB and implanted with false memories. The recording reveals that Cohaagen will use robots to invade the Colony so the UFB will have more living space. Hauser, however, has seen a "kill code" that would disable the robots. The code can be recovered from his memory by Resistance leader Matthias. Melina reveals that she was Hauser's lover before Hauser was captured; she proves that they knew each other by showing that they have matching scars. The police surround the apartment building and Harry appears. He tries to convince Quaid that he is still in a Rekall-induced dream and that killing Melina is the only way out. Quaid is conflicted, but notices a tear on Melina's cheek and shoots Harry instead. Lori pursues the pair inside the building's lifts, but fails to capture them.

Quaid and Melina meet with Matthias. While Matthias searches Quaid's memories, Lori and Cohaagen storm the Resistance base. Cohaagen reveals that Hauser was in fact working for him without Quaid even knowing it due to the memory alteration, using the kill code as a trap. Cohaagen kills Matthias and arranges to restore Hauser's memory before leaving with Melina as a prisoner. As the officers are about to inject Quaid, Hammond (revealed to be one of the police officers involved in the raid) sacrifices himself to help Quaid escape.

Cohaagen begins his invasion of the Colony, loading the Fall with his army of robots. Quaid sneaks on board, setting timed explosives throughout the ship while searching for Melina. After freeing her, they climb atop the Fall as it arrives at the Colony. As they fight the soldiers and Cohaagen, Quaid's explosives detonate. Quaid and Melina jump off before the ship plummets back into the tunnel and explodes underground, killing Cohaagen and destroying his army.

Waking up in an ambulance, Quaid is greeted by Melina. When he notices that she is missing her scar, he realizes that she is Lori in disguise; they fight and Lori is killed. Quaid finds the real Melina outside the ambulance and they embrace.

(In the extended director's cut, Quaid finds a bandage on the inside of his elbow, but there is no wound. He then remembers that a peace sign tattoo had been placed there while he was at Rekall. This hints that everything was an implanted Rekall memory Quaid has been experiencing since sitting in the chair at Rekall. This ending is briefly suggested in the regular cut when, at the end, Quaid sees a Rekall sign in the distance and momentarily wonders about his recent experiences.) **(WIKIPEDIA)**

**SYNOPSIS:** At the end of 21st Century, the Earth is divided into two territories the United Federation of Britain (UFB) and the Colony (formerly Australia) after chemical warfare devastates the remainder of the planet. Many residents of the Colony travel to the UFB to work in their factories via "the Fall", a gravity elevator, which travels through the Earth. Habitable space is at a minimum in both the UFB and the Colony.

A factory worker named Douglas Quaid (Colin Farrell) decides to visit Rekall, a company that implants artificial memories. Rekall employee McClane (John Cho) convinces Quaid to be implanted with memories of a secret agent. Quaid is tested to avoid having implanted memories conflicting with real memories, and McClane discovers that Quaid has real memories being a spy. McClane and his co-workers are suddenly gunned down by a SWAT team. While Quaid is being arrested, he instinctively reacts and kills the officers before escaping. Quaid returns home to his wife Lori (Kate Beckinsale) and confesses what has transpired. Lori attempts to kill Quaid, revealing that she is not his wife of seven years, but an undercover UFB agent who has been monitoring him for the past six weeks. Quaid manages to escape, and Hammond (Dylan Smith), a man claiming to be a former associate, contacts Quaid via a cell phone embedded in Quaid's hand, disclosing the location of a nearby safe-deposit box. Quaid cuts the cell phone out of his hand to avoid being traced. In the safe-deposit box, Quaid discovers a recorded message from his former self, leading him to an apartment in UFB.

On the way, Quaid meets Melina (Jessica Biel), the woman from his dreams. At the apartment, Quaid

uses a piano to trigger a second recorded message. The recording reveals that Quaid was formerly Carl Hauser, a highly skilled agent working for Chancellor Vilos Cohaagen (Bryan Cranston). After joining the resistance movement, Hauser was captured and implanted with false memories of life as a factory worker. The recording reveals a plot by Cohaagen's administration to use its synthetic police force to invade the Colony to provide more living space for UFB, but that Hauser had seen a code that could stop the robotic forces; it is still in Quaid's memory, and can be recovered with the aid of resistance leader Matthias (Bill Nighy). Melina reveals that she was Hauser's lover, but the two were separated when Hauser was captured. Tracked to the apartment by the police, Quaid and Melina find themselves surrounded. Quaid's friend and colleague from the Colony, named Harry (Bokeem Woodbine), arrives and tries to convince Quaid that he is in a Rekall-induced dream and that killing Melina is the only way to wake up. Quaid is conflicted, but seeing a tear in Melina's eye, he concludes that he is not dreaming and kills Harry.

Quaid flees with Melina to the Resistance headquarters, where Matthias attempts to recover the code from Quaid's mind. Accessing Quaid's memories reveals that the code was a plot to allow Cohaagen to locate Matthias. Cohaagen and his forces arrive, kill Matthias, and capture Quaid and Melina. Cohaagen plans to erase Quaid's personality and restore the memories of his loyal agent Hauser. Quaid is able to escape with the aid of Hammond, who has infiltrated Cohaagen's forces, but Hammond dies in the process. Quaid infiltrates the Fall where Quaid finds Cohaagen's robotic forces in stasis. He plants time-detonation bombs aboard the Fall before rescuing Melina. He and Melina are pursued by Cohaagen's forces and ultimately end up on top of the Fall as it lands in the Colony. Quaid and Melina fight Cohaagen and his forces, and manage to escape the Fall when the bombs detonate. The Fall is destroyed, incinerating Cohaagen in the process.

Quaid wakes up in an ambulance and is greeted by Melina, but he notices the absence of an old gunshot wound on her hand and realizes it is Lori in disguise. Quaid manages to disarm and kill Lori. Quaid and Melina are reunited and embrace as he remembers that the Rekall worker put a peace sign symbol on his forearm before injecting him with the dream chemicals. He pulls off a bandage to reveal that there is no peace sign symbol on his forearm. Melina asks him what's wrong and he replies nothing. A Rekall billboard plays in the background.

**CLIMAX:** Douglas Quaid acknowledges he really is Carl Hauser.

#### **MEMORABLE QUOTES:**

**Doug Quaid:** If I'm not me, then who the hell am I?

**Lori Quaid:** How would I know? I just work here.

**Doug Quaid:** Speculate.

**Lori Quaid:** If I had to guess, all the trouble Cohaagen's taken to hide you from the Resistance, you must be fairly important. And with your skill set, I think it's highly doubtful you're his gardener.

**Doug Quaid:** Cohaa... Cohaagen's trying to hide me? Why are you trying to kill me? Talk!

**Lori Quaid:** Call it the seven-year-itch, Doug. Oh. And by the way, you haven't even \*begun\* to see me try to kill you!

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**Matthias:** Mr. Hauser, What is it you want?

**Doug Quaid:** I want to help you.

**Matthias:** That is not the only reason you are here.

**Doug Quaid:** I want to remember.

**Matthias:** Why?

**Doug Quaid:** So I can be myself, be who I was.

**Matthias:** It is each man's quest to find out who he truly is, but the answer to that lies in the present, not in the past. As it is for all of us.

**Doug Quaid:** But the past tells us who we've become.

**Matthias:** The past is a construct of the mind. It blinds us. It fools us into believing it. But the heart wants to live in the present. Look there. You'll find your answer.

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**Melina:** Hauser, we've been looking for you.

**Doug Quaid:** Don't call me... My name is Doug Quaid. I was born August 29th. All right. I was

raised by my mother. She died of cancer before my 15th birthday. I married my girlfriend when I was 29!

Melina: You were born April 29th. You were raised by your father, not your mother. He died before you were 15, but in a car crash. And believe me, you were most definitely not married.

Three-Breasted Woman: Trust me, baby, you're gonna wish you had three hands.

Slacker: Hey, Robo-dick, that's mine!

Matthias: The past is just a mental construct.

Lori Quaid: Did you really think I'd let you leave without a kiss goodbye?

Doug Quaid: Tell me what is going on? Talk! Or we can skip to "Until death do us apart."

Lori Quaid: I'm not your wife.

Doug Quaid: That's bullshit. We've been married for seven years.

Lori Quaid: I'm U.F.B. police intel, assigned to play your wife. Six weeks ago. I didn't even know you.

Doug Quaid: What are you talking about?

Lori Quaid: It's true. Your memory was erased, your mind was implanted with a life you think you've lived. You keeping up, baby? There is no Douglas Quaid, there never was.

Doug Quaid: Are you saying I don't... This... Every... Our marriage...

Lori Quaid: What can I say? I give good wife.

[first lines] Melina: Wake up. Wake up. Wake up.

Slacker: [Doug cuts the mobile phone out of his hand] Holy shit. What is that? Where can I get one?

Doug Quaid: Oh, shit. Lori.

Melina: Who?

Doug Quaid: It's my wife.

Melina: You're married?

Doug Quaid: It's safe to say we're separated.

Lori Quaid: You might want to give your little girlfriend a kiss goodbye. As long as she doesn't mind where those lips have been.

Doug Quaid: Everyone seems to know me, but me.

**MAIN THEMES:** reality & memory; love, hatred, and trust; (anti)hero or villain?; true identity, true fate; labour imports; Technological advances; dictatorship; real or fake memories?; memory implantation; global eco disaster; resource-heavy tech; dystopian vision of a world where “the haves” (United Federation of Britain) are working feverishly to eliminate what remains of “the have-nots” (The Colony); leadership; rebellion; human exploitation; organised power vs resistance; commuting; greed; truth vs lies; surveillance ops; deception & manipulation used as weapons; alternate realities; assuming a different identity; What is Real and What is Recall?; Stormtroopers and Clone Troopers; the world of emotion versus the world of intellect; Can we really suppress or subjugate a person's mind, and a person's memories, and a person's experiences, mentally, psychologically, intellectually? What does the heart remember?

**PLOT KEYWORDS:** factory worker; factory; spy; on the run; dream; false memory; future; apartment; police; nightmare; secret agent; Big Ben London; undercover; double cross; chancellor; government agent; futuristic train; swat team; interview; shot in the forehead; female assassin; explosive; routine; severed arm; rebellion; piano; slow motion scene; murder; army; brain scanner; lasso; assassin; topless female nudity; torso cut in half; fugitive; stasis; no opening credits; corrupt politician; lens flare;

disguise; resistance; deception; reference to Barack Obama; piano key; magnetic levitation; bar; laid off; fight; husband murders wife; amnesia; helicopter; bulletproof vest; held at gunpoint; manipulation; catfight; martial arts; terrorist; injection; foot chase; reference to Ian Fleming; villain not really dead; cliché; social commentary; female warrior; newscast; pack of money; center of the earth; zero gravity; oppression; subway; knife fight; stylized violence; shot in the shoulder; reluctant hero; post apocalypse; action hero; fight the system; elevator; action heroine; body scanner; megalomaniac; tough girl; media coverage; cell phone; terrorism; totalitarianism; car crash; escape; assassination attempt; surveillance; tear on cheek; robot soldier; falling through a rooftop window; exploding train; new hire; british colonialism; piano playing; undercover agent; suppression; woman punches a man; exploding body; brawl; shootout; cyberpunk; flashback; car chase; knife; tied to a chair; shot in the hand; implanted memory; flying car; husband wife relationship; hit in the throat; weightlessness; hand to hand combat; superspy; grand piano; sci fi movie remake; stun gun; stabbed in the hand; remake of cult classic; lasersight; rebel hero; gravity assisted subway; facial reconstruction; invasion; pistol; female spy; warrior; punched in the face; scar; dream interpretation; phone booth; gunfight; chemical warfare; undercover cop; dystopia; safe deposit box; bare chested male; bomb; elevator shaft; torture; violence; gas mask; train explosion ; ambulance; flash grenade; police chase; anti hero; machine gun; parasol; running for your life; jumping from height; threebreasted woman; fake id; body armor; tough guy; artificial intelligence; betrayal; robot; taser; female fighter; peace symbol; based on short story; resistance fighter; shooting a police officer; abandoned building; fistfight; smog; mutant; gatling gun; interrogation; shot to death; time bomb; desert eagle; news report; falling from height; fictional war; hologram; killer robot; self mutilation; bombing; chase; one man army; megacorporation; repressed memory; stabbed in the stomach; shot in the back; political corruption; robot cop; double agent; grenade; terrorist plot; shot in the chest; explosion; female killer; world domination; security guard; drunkenness; shot in the head; surprise ending

Paul Verhoeven's 1990 original sci-fi adaptation of Philip K. Dick's short story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale," that inspired that other film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger whose dreams and memories are interchanged

**TECHNOLOGY/GADGETS:** flying cars, multi-layered constructions, highways and a complex maze of giant elevators; using the hand as an illuminated phone, giving new meaning to keeping your mobile phone close; ...